

TO: All Conservation Districts

FROM: Lynn Brown, Chair

DATE: JULY 20, 2001

SUBJECT: ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OPINION ON CONSERVATION DISTRICT ELECTIONS

On July 12, 2001, [Attorney General Christine Gregoire issued a formal opinion](#) (known as an AGO) on questions involving conservation district elections. The AGO was requested by Senator Morton after several conservation districts raised concerns regarding election directions issued by the Conservation Commission and based on our attorney's advice. In short, Attorney General Gregoire agreed with the Commission and stated that district elections are now part of the State's general election law, RCW 29. A copy of that opinion is attached to this memo, as I wanted to make sure every district had a complete copy in their possession. Several of you are probably asking: "What next?"

WACD and the Commission are currently working with legislators and their staffs to try and craft a bill that would put the general election provisions on hold for a year and set up a process to review supervisor selection processes. It is our hope that such a bill could be adopted during the third special session of 2001, which could occur any day. If the Legislature doesn't deal with CD elections, we are obligated to go ahead with this Fall's general election process.

I know that emotions have been running high since last November when this issue was discussed and voted on at the WACD convention. Emotions are not bad. In fact, most of us are involved with districts and conservation issues because we have that passion in our hearts to do what is right. Unfortunately, this was not an issue where there was only one "right" answer. However, because the Attorney General has ruled on Senator Morton's request, we are now obligated to follow that advice. I urge you to continue to work with your county auditor to ensure that a district election this fall can go forward if needed. We will let you know immediately if the Legislature provides another option.

Finally, I urge you to plan now to attend both your WACD area meetings and the annual meeting in Bellingham. To quote Woody Allen, "Eighty percent of success is showing up." If we are to succeed in crafting an elections solution, we need all of you to participate and form a united voice on district elections.

Attachment

cc: Commission Members
WACD Officers and Directors
Commission Staff